

REMARKS

By this Amendment, claims 1-9 and 17-18 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 19-41 are newly added. Claims 10-16 were previously withdrawn from consideration. Therefore, claims 19-41 are pending in the application.

The claims are amended to more clearly define the present invention. The present claim amendments are not necessitated by any prior art, applied or otherwise, and do not create any estoppel.

A new Abstract is provided.

No new matter has been added by the present Amendment.

Reconsideration and allowance of all claims are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

- Canceled claims 1-9, 17, and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the written description requirement. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection to the extent that some of the subject claim language is found in newly added claims 19-41.

Regarding canceled claim 1, the ground of rejection posits that “the skirt portion is mechanically attached to the rigid face portion through a mating connection” is a limitation “not found in within the specification.” (i.e., Paper No. 16, pg. 2). Applicants respectfully disagree.

The claim 1 limitation “skirt portion formed of a synthetic second resin and mechanically attached to the rigid face portion by mating with the edges of the face portion” is subject matter that is illustrated by way of example in the application by the embodiment described at page 6, lines 12-13, referencing drawing Figures 3B and 3C. As shown therein, a two-tiered locking element 18 extending from perimeter edge 16 (e.g., page 6, lines 4-5; Figs. 2B, 2C) is interlocked, or mated, with locking element 32 formed around and, thus, complementary with

locking element 18. Due to the interlocking nature of locking elements 18 and 32, face portion 12 and skirt portion 26 of cap 10 will not come apart absent breaking or melting of cap 10 (e.g., page 8, lines 1-3).

Regarding canceled claim 2, the ground of rejection posits that “a male interconnecting member and a female interconnecting member accomplish the mating connection [is] a limitation [] not found within the specification.” (i.e., Paper No. 16, pg. 3). Applicants respectfully disagree.

The claimed “mating includes joinder of a male interconnecting member and a female interconnecting member” is described in the same portions of the specification just discussed regarding claim 1. In addition, Figs. 2A, 2B, 3A and 3B clearly show an exemplary embodiment where locking element 18 includes a male interconnecting member and locking element 32 includes a female interconnecting member.

Since the above-cited portions of Applicants’ specification and drawing figures describe and illustrate a “mating” that includes “a male interconnecting member and a female interconnecting member,” the claim limitations in question are fully supported.

Applicants respectfully request the above discussion the § 112 rejection of canceled claims 1-9, 17, and 18 be considered regarding newly added claims 19-41.

- Claim 1 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Dugas, et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,612,692). Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection is rendered moot by the present claim amendments.

- In addition, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner consider the following remarks in her examination of newly added claims 19-41.

Dugas discloses a backlit membrane type keyboard (e.g., Fig. 3) having keys that each

include a hollow core, a transparent upper surface 48, and an opaque skirt 50 (e.g., 2: 32-33; 5: 49-53; Fig. 4). As shown therein in Figs. 4 (key up) and 4A (key down), a key 16 includes many separate structures including a sidewall 52, a vertical wall 54 molded into keyboard panel 14, and the opaque skirt 50 (e.g., 5: 50-54). Walls 54 are configured so that walls 52 of key 16 ride therealong in closely spaced relation for guiding vertical movement of key 16 (e.g., 5: 61-64).

By comparison, the key 16 of *Dugas* does not teach or suggest “a skirt portion formed of a synthetic second resin and mechanically attached to the rigid face portion by mating with the plurality of edges of the face portion,” as claimed in newly added claim 19. Since the *Dugas* reference does not teach or suggest all the claim limitations, it would not have been obvious to have provided the claimed structure. MPEP §§ 2142, 2143 (case citations omitted).

In addition, since the specification details by example how the claimed structure as a whole provides several improvements over conventional devices, there would have been no suggestion or motivation of such structure in view of the applied art. MPEP §§ 2141 (case citations omitted).

- Claims 2-9, 17, and 18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over *Dugas* in view of *So* (U.S. Patent No. 5,588,760). Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection is rendered moot by the present claim amendments.

- In addition, Applicants respectfully request the Examiner consider the following remarks in her examination of newly added claims 19-41.

The secondary reference *So* does not cure the above-noted deficiencies of the *Dugas* reference. Specifically, *So* also does not teach or suggest “a skirt portion formed of a synthetic second resin and mechanically attached to the rigid face portion by mating with the plurality of edges of the face portion,” as claimed in newly added claim 19.

So discloses female guide means 45 for engagement with male guide means 14 of key switch 1 (e.g., 3: 38-40; Figs. 2, 3). Key switch 1 includes a key cap 11, a stepped plunger 13, and the male guide means 14 extending down from the bottom side of key cap 11; as shown, the male guide means includes two separate plates that engage with female guide means 45 located in a key holder frame 4. The key cap's stepped plunger is also inserted into the key holder frame 4, in a hollow cylindrical key holder 41 (e.g., 3: 1-5, 29-30, 38-40; Fig. 3).

By comparison, the male guide means 14 of *So* is not employed in any manner related to "a skirt portion formed of a synthetic second resin and mechanically attached to the rigid face portion by mating with the plurality of edges of the face portion," as claimed in newly added claim 19.

In addition, since the *So* device is entirely different from the claimed structure, there would have been no suggestion or motivation to have modified *So*.

- In sum, none of the applied references, alone or in combination, would have taught or suggested what is claimed.

Request for Interview

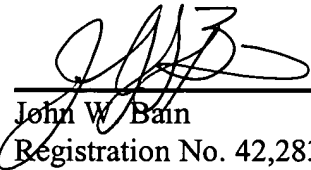
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly **requested to call** the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Amendment under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Application Serial Number 09/897,344

Applicant hereby petitions for any extension of time which may be required to maintain the pendency of this case, and any required fee, except for the Issue Fee, for such extension is to be charged to Deposit Account No. 10-0270.

Respectfully submitted,

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